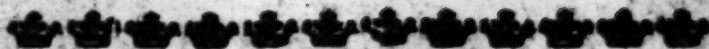


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AN  
APPEAL

For the TRUTH of the  
CHRISTIAN RELIGION.



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For the A. R. U. H. of the

CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

A N  
A P P E A L  
TO THE  
UNDERSTANDING  
OF THE  
*Meanest Capacities*

*K* For the TRUTH of the  
CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

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*By a Divine of the Church of England.*

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L O N D O N:  
Printed for J. GRAY at the Cross-Keys in  
the Poultry. 1728.

A P P E A L

OF THE  
UNDERSTANDING  
OF THE

MEANS OF OBTAINING



CHRISTIANITY

By a Disciple of the Church of England


LONDON:  
Printed for J. Galt at the Crown in  
the Strand, 1793.





A N  
A P P E A L, &c.

CONCERNING THE  
*Truth of the Christian Religion.*

 S no Person has writ  
with greater Strength  
of Reason, for the  
natural and indispu-  
table Right, which all Men have  
for publishing their Thoughts con-  
cerning their Opinions of Religi-  
on, than *the Author of the Grounds  
and Reasons of the Christian Religion;*

A

so

so I am certain that neither He, nor any one else will take amiss the Liberty I have used in this short Essay; how much soever I differ from him in my Thoughts concerning the Truth of Christianity. And this I shall endeavour to do in as short a Compass, as I can for the Sake of those for whom I chiefly design this: referring those, who have Time and Leisure, to those more large Defences of Christianity, which this Controversy has happily occasioned.

Now the first thing necessary to be observed is, what is the *only absolute Proof*; or, as that Author

thor is pleased to call it, *the only absolute Ground, or Foundation* of the Truth of the Christian Religion? He is pleased to make the *Prophecies* of the Old, with their Completions, in the New Testament, the *only absolute Proof* of the Truth of Christianity; and to affirm *positively*, that Christ and his Apostles have placed it upon the same Foundation. But I must beg leave to differ from him for the following Reasons:

1. The *Prophecies* of the Old, and the Completions of them in the New, Testament, cannot be said to be the *only Proof*, or conclusive Argument for the Truth of Christianity;

stianity ; because they are only one Part of the Evidence of his being the *Messiah* ; indeed it must be confessed, if He were not the Person, whom the *Prophecies* in the Old Testament foretel his coming into the World, to make a New Revelation of God's Will to Mankind, the Truth of the Christian Religion would be overturned ; so likewise if the Doctrine he has revealed in the New Testament were not agreeable to the Principles of sound Reason, Christianity would be certainly false ; if any thing in the Christian Religion were contradictory to the Moral Attributes of God ; or to Moral Goodness and Virtue, all the Pretensions to

a Divine Commiffion would be groundless and false ; but will any Man of Sense say, that *Prophecies*, and the Completions of *Prophecies* are the only conclusive Arguments for the Truth of Christianity ; when they are only one Part of the *Proof*, which is used for the Truth of the Christian Religion.

WITH the same Reason may the Author of the *Literal Scheme* say, that *Seneca's* Words about the Discovery of a New World is a *Proof* of *Columbus's* being raised by GOD for the Discovery of *America* ; or that he had a Commiffion from GOD to make that  
Dis-



Discovery to Mankind ; as to say that the *Prophecies* of the Old, and their Completions in the New, Testament, are the only Proof of the Truth of the Christian Religion. Had *Columbus* proved, that he was the Person foretold by *Seneca*, then the Proofs, which he brought, joined to the Prophecy referred to, as designed to be completed in and by him, would have been an Argument that *Columbus* was the Person foretold by *Seneca*. But as no such Proof was produced by *Columbus*, from hence it is, that no one imagines him to have been prophesied about, or that *Seneca's* Words (however spoken  
in



in a propheticall Manner) were *Proofs* of his being sent by GOD for that Purpose.

So likewise, if any one should say that *Seneca's* Morals, or *Tully's* Offices are of Divine Inspiration; or that both, or either of those *Great Moralists* had a Divine Commission to reveal their respective Doctrines to the World; and should say this; because what they have delivered is agreeable to sound Reason; and should aver this to be a *Proof*, that what they say came from GOD; just as it had been said by some, that the Purity or Reasonableness of the Christian Doctrines is a *Proof* of their

their being revealed by GOD's Command to Mankind, in both these Cases the Argument would be inconclusive. For in none of these Cases can it be properly and justly said, that the Purity and Reasonableness of *Seneca's*, or *Tully's*, or *Christ's*, Doctrines, are any *Proof*; much less *only and absolute Proofs* of the Divine Original of them: and 'tis exactly the same in other Cases, if they are agreeable to the moral Attributes of GOD; or to the Laws of moral Goodness, they can in no tolerable Sense be said to be *Proofs* that they are *revealed* by GOD; nor ought such Arguments to be brought as *Proofs* of

of the Truth of the Christian Religion; nor were they ever brought by Christ and his Apostles as *such*; but these are Arguments of that sort which the Logicians call *sine qua non*. They do not prove that their Author comes from God; but only that he *can not* come from God, unless his Doctrines have this Qualification.

2. SINCE there are so many Miracles recorded in the New Testament, and the Ends for which they were done, are there mentioned; these, joined to the *Prophecies* with their Completions, are to be considered as the *only and*

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*absolute Proof* of the Truth of the Christian Revelation. Prophecies in the Old, fulfill'd in the New Testament, are never appealed to by Christ, or his Apostles, as the *only and absolute Proofs* of Divine Mission: but only as Marks, without which He could not be the *Messiah*; or the great Person who was to come into the World to demand Obedience from all Mankind. And as a Person, who answers all the Characters in the Old Testament, might justly claim the Character of the *Messiah*; so by no other *Proof* but *Miracles* can it be made evident, that He really was the Person he pretended to be.

be. And therefore, 3dly, If we carefully read the New Testament, we shall find, that Christ and his Apostles always appeal to, and make *Miracles* the *only* and *absolute Proof* of his coming from GOD, and doing his Will; as will be made appear by and by. Fulfill'd *Prophecies* (as I have already observed) are not the *Proof*, the *only absolute Proof* of a Divine Commission to reveal God's Will to Mankind.

THEY are, as the Learned Dr. Clark says, “ the *Causa sine qua non* ; ” or as the Learned and Judicious Dr. Sykes says, “ They are not brought, nor intended,

“ tended, as Proofs of *Jesus* be-  
 “ ing the *Christ*; but in all those  
 “ Places, where real Prophecies  
 “ are cited, they are intended  
 “ to be *Marks* or *Characters* of  
 “ the *Messiah*, which in Fact a-  
 “ greed to *Jesus*. When the E-  
 “ vangelists tell us, what the  
 “ Proofs of Christianity are,  
 “ they say, *Many other signs did*  
 “ *Jesus* in the presence of his dis-  
 “ ciples, but these are written,  
 “ that ye might believe that *Jesus*  
 “ is the *Christ* (a). And St. *Luke*  
 “ says, (b) *Jesus* of *Nazereth* was

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(a) John xx. 30, 31.

(b) chap. xxiv.



“ a prophet mighty in word and  
 “ deed, before God and all the pec-  
 “ ple. And our Saviour himself  
 “ says (c), If I had not done among  
 “ them the works, which none o-  
 “ ther man did, they had not had  
 “ sin.” If the Word *Messiah* and  
 the Truth of the Christian Re-  
 velation signify one and the same  
 thing, as they do in this Con-  
 troversy; then I think that *Pro-*  
*phesies* fulfilled, are so far from  
 being the *only absolute Proof* of  
 this Truth; that they are only  
 as Part of this *Proof*: and that  
 Christ, and his Apostles, have

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(c) John xv. 24.

never made them more than that. They have made the *only absolute Proof* to depend entirely upon a *sensible Fact*, which almost all Mankind are capable of passing a true Judgment upon, and in a more eminent manner upon this particular *Fact*, his *Resurrection from the Dead*. And accordingly we find that the Jews, (when not so fully satisfied, as they ought to have been, that he was the *Messiah*, from the *Miracles* he had wrought amongst them) demanded still a further *Proof* of his being the *Messiah*. They desired a *Sign* from him, as appears in the following Places:

(d)

(d) Then certain of the Scribes and Pharisees answered saying, Master, we would see a SIGN from thee.

(e) And the Pharisees came forth, and began to question with him, seeking of him a SIGN from Heaven tempting him.

And others tempting him, sought of him a SIGN from Heaven. Now the Answer given to this by our Saviour is recorded in several Places, and is as follows : (g) An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a Sign, and

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(d) Matth. xii. 38.

(e) Mark viii. 11.

(g) Matth. xii. 39, 40.

there shall no Sign given to it, but the Sign of the prophet Jonas. For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. And to the same Purpose, tho' not exactly in the same words. And when the people were gathered thick together, he began to say, this is an evil generation: they seek a Sign, and there shall be no Sign given it, but the Sign of Jonas the prophet. For as Jonas was a Sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of Man be to this generation. \*

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\* Luke xi. 29, 30.

AND so likewise in St. Mat-  
 thew (b); *A wicked and adulte-  
 rous generation seeketh after a Sign,  
 and there shall be no Sign given un-  
 to it, but the Sign of the prophet  
 Jonas, and he left them and de-  
 parted.* And again in St. John  
 (i) *Then answered the Jews, and  
 said unto him, what Sign shewest  
 thou unto us, seeing that thou doest  
 these things? Jesus answered and said  
 unto them, destroy this Temple, and  
 in three days, I will raise it up.*

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(b) Matth. xvi. 4.

(i) John ii. 18, 19, 20 &c.

Then said the Jews, forty and six years was this Temple in building, and wilt thou raise it up in three Days? But he spake of the Temple of his body.

Now this Sign (to wit, his Death to some determinate Time, and his Resurrection to Life again, at the end of that Time) is a *sensible Fact*, which all Mankind, even the meanest and poorest of us, are capable of passing a true Judgment upon; and what was proper to convince every one of us, especially as it was foretold by him, and made a Test of his *Veracity* of his being the *Messiah*; or of the  
the



the Truth of the Christian Religion. It is therefore no wonder that upon this single *Sign*, and *sensible Fact* the Truth of the Christian Religion is plainly and undeniably put by our Blessed Saviour himself.

AND to use the words of the Learned and Judicious Dr. Sykes,  
 “ This is what every Body was  
 “ equally a Judge of; and what  
 “ the ignorant and most illite-  
 “ rate Jew might easily compre-  
 “ hend with the most learned  
 “ and knowing Scribe. A Re-  
 “ surrection carried its own E-  
 “ vidence with it: for if a Man  
 C 2 “ were

“ were dead and buried, and  
 “ afterwards appeared alive, just  
 “ as he *foretold* he should, ’tis e-  
 “ vident that God must be with  
 “ him, and must set his Seal to  
 “ confirm what such a Person  
 “ had said.

“ EVERY body was Judge of  
 “ such a Fact; and every honest  
 “ Man would, and indeed must,  
 “ reason in such a manner; and  
 “ therefore every honest Man was  
 “ under a Necessity of being go-  
 “ verned by such Evidence: and  
 “ if the Providence of God  
 “ were to permit an Impostor to  
 “ proceed in such a manner, with-  
 “ out any Interposition, ’twould  
 “ be

“ be laying such a stumbling  
 “ Block in the way of his Crea-  
 “ tures, that the wisest must fall;  
 “ and such a Snare as must in-  
 “ fallibly catch the most honest  
 “ and sincere.” From all this,  
 I think it plain, that our *Saviour*  
 made his Death and Resurre-  
 ction, after a fixed Time, to Life  
 again, the *primary and principal*  
*Proof* of his being the *Messiah*,  
 and of the Truth of the Christi-  
 an Religion. Not but our *Savi-*  
*our* made use of other Proofs for  
 the Truth of his being the *Mes-*  
*siab*; but then I think they are  
 all subordinate to this *primary*  
*Ground and principal Proof.*

THE first *Miracle* our *Saviour* did, after he had published his *Doctrine* to the *World*, was at that *Time* the *only absolute Proof* of his being the *Messiah*, or the *Person* he pretended to be; *That* ceased to be so, when a second *Miracle* was wrought, then *they* became the *only absolute Proof*; and every succeeding *Miracle* encreased the *Evidence*, and added to the *Force* of the preceeding *ones*, till his *Resurrection* from the *Dead*; and then all the *Miracles* joined together, became the *only and absolute Proof*.

AFTER

AFTER his Resurrection to Life again exactly at the Time foretold by himself, this *sensible Fact*, or *Sign* foretold as it was, and given as a remarkable and uncontestable *Test*, became the Principal, (and as it is circumstanced, it became an *absolute Proof* of his being the *Messiah*, and of the Truth of the Christian Religion; as will very plainly appear to any one that will read over the New Testament with Exactness and Care.

I CANNOT but remark secondly,

THAT

THAT as our *Saviour* himself has placed the Truth of his Religion upon this great *Proof, Ground, or Foundation*; so his Apostles have done exactly the same thing, as plainly appears from the following Places. (k) *Beginning from the Baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his Resurrection.* (l) *This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.* (m) *Be it known unto you all, and to all*

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(k) Acts i. 22.

(l) — ii. 32.

(m) — iv. 10, 33.



the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: (n) And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead. (o) If we believe on him, who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead. (p) If thou shalt confess with thy mouth, the Lord Jesus; and shalt believe in thine heart, that God hath raised him

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(n) Rom. i. 4.

(o) — iv. 24.

(p) — x. 9.

*from the dead, thou shalt be saved.* To which many other Places might be added.

THUS I have laid before the Reader, in as concise a manner as I could, *what* seems to be the *only absolute Proof, Ground, or Foundation*, upon which our *Saviour* and his Apostles have made the Truth of *Jesus's* being the *Messiah*, and of his Religion solely and entirely depend. I might easily have enlarged upon each of the preceding Topicks: but as I desire this Controversy may be brought into as narrow a Compass as possible; so I intended to shew upon what Principles Christianity

stianity may be supported, in a plain and easy manner, adapted to the lowest Capacities; and that I have no other End but to find out the Truth; and to treat of it in such a manner, as becomes an impartial Enquirer after it.

*F I N I S.*

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